

CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study uses a qualitative descriptive research design. A descriptive qualitative approach is appropriate because the primary aim of this research is to describe, analyze, and explain the meaning and aesthetic function of song lyrics through the lens of stylistics, rather than to quantify or statistically measure linguistic patterns. Stylistics is used as the main analytical tool within this qualitative framework; situated at the intersection of literary analysis and linguistics, it studies how language is used in texts to create particular meanings and aesthetic effects. According to Simpson (2025), stylistics is a method of textual interpretation that emphasizes the role of language in producing literary meaning and applies linguistic description to the full range of a text's communicative functions. A qualitative descriptive technique is therefore consistent with the nature of stylistic inquiry, which is fundamentally an interpretative process grounded in close reading.

The data examined in this study consist of words, phrases, and sentences drawn from song lyrics, rather than numerical or statistical data. A descriptive qualitative technique is well suited to this research because its central goal is to describe, analyze, and explain the meaning and function of figurative devices within the specific linguistic and cultural context of Billie Eilish's song lyrics. This approach is consistent with the methodology used in comparable stylistic studies of song lyrics, including Wulandari & Khumairo Ma'shumah (2025), Ngailo et al. (2022), and Farida Nur Afifah et al. (2025), all of which apply a descriptive qualitative framework to the analysis of figurative language in contemporary popular music.

3.2 Data and Data Source

The primary data for this study consist of the official song lyrics written and performed by Billie Eilish, specifically from three selected tracks: "*Lunch*," "*The Greatest*," and "*Wish You Were Gay*." The textual

lyrics were retrieved from *Genius.com* and subsequently cross-checked against the official audio recordings and verified lyric releases from the artist's official channels to ensure textual accuracy and authenticity.

The data were selected using a purposive sampling technique, guided by specific theoretical and analytical criteria rather than random distribution. First, the songs were chosen based on thematic diversity, representing three distinct emotional and conceptual registers: romantic desire and physical exploration ("*Lunch*"), emotional exhaustion and unreciprocated sacrifice ("*The Greatest*"), and interpersonal rejection and psychological defense mechanisms ("*Wish You Were Gay*"). Second, selection was determined by the density of figurative language, ensuring that the chosen texts contained a sufficiently rich concentration of stylistic devices (such as metaphors, hyperbole, irony, and symbolism) to answer the research questions effectively. Finally allowing for a systematic comparative analysis of how the artist's stylistic choices operate across different thematic contexts.

The data for this study consist of the lyrics of three Billie Eilish songs: "*Lunch*," "*The Greatest*," and "*Wish You Were Gay*." These three songs were selected as data sources for three reasons. First, each song addresses a distinct theme desire and physical attraction in "*Lunch*," disappointment and emotional exhaustion in "*The Greatest*," and unrequited rejection in "*Wish You Were Gay*", producing a thematically diverse and representative sample of Eilish's lyrical work. Second, each song contains a substantial amount of figurative language, allowing for a comprehensive stylistic analysis. Third, the songs represent Eilish's distinctive lyrical style, which has been recognized in the scholarly literature for its innovative use of figurative language (Theodora & Setiawan, 2024; Aras et al., 2024; Ngailo et al., 2022). This linguistic analysis is also explained in the data used in the research which systematically becomes the data source, primary data and secondary data which are described as follows:

3.2.1 Primary Data

The primary data of this study are the official lyrics of the three selected songs, drawn from two different periods of Billie Eilish's career in order to provide a broader stylistic range. "Lunch" and "The Greatest" are taken from her third studio album, *Hit Me Hard and Soft* (2024), representing her more mature and evolved lyrical style. "Wish You Were Gay" is taken from her debut album, *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?* (2019). Selecting songs from two different albums allows the study to observe stylistic patterns in Eilish's use of figurative language across two distinct stages of her musical development. The lyrics themselves were retrieved from Genius.com and cross-checked against the lyrics published on Billie Eilish's official artist account to confirm their accuracy; this verification step is intended to preserve the integrity of the primary data, so that any semantic deviation or rhetorical pattern identified in the analysis reflects the artist's writing as accurately as possible.

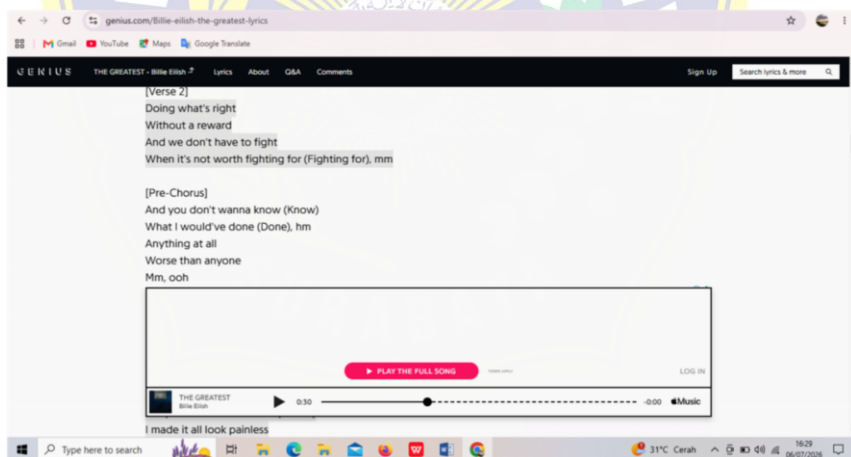


Figure 3.2.1 the example of lyrics

3.2.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data are used to support the interpretation of the primary data and consist of published, artist-authored commentary on the meaning of the three songs. This includes an article published by Rolling Stone discussing the background and lyrical content of “Lunch”; a discussion on the Apple Music YouTube channel addressing the production and emotional content of “The Greatest”; and a discussion on the Genius YouTube channel in which Eilish explains the personal background and figurative language of “Wish You Were Gay.” These secondary sources are used only to support and contextualize the researcher’s interpretation of the figurative patterns identified in the primary data; they are not treated as independent data for stylistic classification.

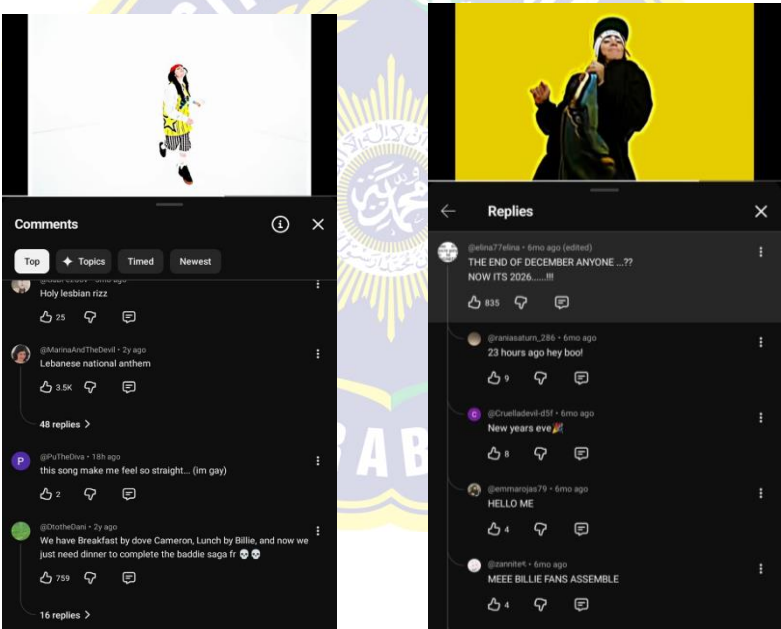


Figure 3.2.2 the example of comments

3.3. Research Instrument

In qualitative stylistic research, the primary research instrument is the researcher herself. Using the theoretical frameworks described in Chapter II and close-reading techniques applied to the textual data, the researcher functions as the human instrument responsible for recognizing instances of figurative language, classifying their type, and developing an interpretive account of their stylistic function. This positioning is consistent with Jeffries & McIntyre (2010), who describe stylistic analysis as a practice of skilled, theoryguided reading, and with Rugaiyah et al., (2024), who similarly treat the researcher's informed interpretive engagement with textual data as the foundation of the analytical process.

As a supplementary instrument, the researcher uses a data categorization table (see Appendix A) to organize the analytical process systematically. This table records each identified instance of figurative language together with its corresponding lyric line, type classification, and an interpretive account of its stylistic function and meaning. Comparable studies, Wulandari & Khumairo Ma'shumah (2025), Farida Nur Afifah et al. (2025), and Sihite. (2016), use a similar data classification table as a supporting analytical tool.

The analytical categories in this table are grounded in the frameworks of Leech & Short, (2007) and Jeffries & McIntyre, (2010), which act as the interpretive lens through which the researcher engages with the material and ensure that the analysis remains consistent, theoretically grounded, and methodologically sound. Each figurative instance is further interpreted in relation to three levels of context, its immediate linguistic context, its broader textual context within the song, and its cultural and artistic context within Eilish's work as a whole in accordance with Burke (2023) multi-level contextual approach.

3.4. Data Procedure

This section presents the data collection and analysis techniques as a single, integrated process, reflecting the iterative character of these two activities in qualitative stylistic research. The procedure is divided into four stages (data preparation, data identification, data categorization, and

data interpretation) carried out in accordance with the stylistic framework and text-analysis procedure described by Leech & Short (1969) in *Style in Fiction*. as follows:

1. **Data Preparation.** The lyrics of the three selected songs are collected and cross-checked against verified sources (Genius.com and Billie Eilish's official artist account) to preserve the accuracy of the original data.
2. **Data Identification.** The researcher reads each set of lyrics closely and repeatedly, identifying and marking words or phrases that constitute a stylistic or semantic deviation from literal language.
3. **Data Categorization.** Each identified instance of figurative language is systematically classified into a figurative-language type based on the stylistic categories established by Leech & Short (2007), following the semantic-deviation criteria described in Chapter II.
4. **Data Categorization.** Each identified instance of figurative language is systematically classified into a figurative-language type based on the stylistic categories established by Leech & Short (2007), following following the semantic-deviation criteria described in Chapter II.
5. **Data Interpretation.** Each classified instance is interpreted in terms of its stylistic function, its communicative meaning, and its emotional effect, supported where relevant by the artist's own commentary drawn from the secondary data.

Through these four stages, the stylistic analysis process is applied consistently to every figurative expression identified across the three songs, ensuring that the findings and discussion presented in Chapter IV are grounded in a systematic and traceable analytical procedure.